I noticed in the courtyard a group of political prisoners in civilian clothes and asked the chief guard to be transferred to the political ward. The chief, an undersized old man with a long gray mustache and a row of medals on his breast, seemed puzzled. I still had my glasses, but my rags did not fit into his concept of politicals. "If you are a political," he said, "I shall transfer you to those of your kind. But if you are a thief or a crook, you must be pleased with your present company." He went at once to check my papers. Half an hour later I was in the political ward, washed, in clean linen under a fresh prison uniform.

The Novgorod prison seemed cozy after Ekaterinoslav Castle. Its politicals were all serving comparatively short terms—two or three years—for minor offenses such as dissemination of subversive leaflets or disrespectful remarks about the Tsar. Since I had been brought to Novgorod as a defendant in the Borovenka case, I was treated like other politicals except that I was not permitted to wear civilian clothes.

I asked the chief guard whether Eugene Litkens was among the prisoners. He remembered that a young man of that name had been brought to the prison a couple of years earlier and then transferred somewhere. I understood that he had been freed on bond.

The old chief guard ran the prison as though it were his private household. His word was law for guards and prisoners alike. I saw him quieting a brawl among the common criminals in the courtyard. He rushed into the excited crowd and shouted, "You see this?"

He lifted his left hand high over his head. The hand was deformed by the scar of a blow that had almost chopped off the thumb. The riot immediately subsided and a voice replied, "Surely we see, uncle."

"Then listen!" shouted the chief. "Attention! Turn around! March to the ward!"

The crowd obeyed meekly. My companions explained the old man's gesture. Long ago, a fellow brought to the prison by a convoy had tried to escape. The undersized guard and the soldiers ran after him. The guard first caught up with the prisoner and grabbed him by the arm. A soldier overtook them and raised his sword to strike the prisoner. The guard barked, "Keep off! I am in command here!"

The soldier shouted back, "You are in command in the enclosure but here I do as I please."

He struck at the prisoner's head, but the guard intervened and took the blow on his bare hand. Thereafter he became a hero among the common criminals. By showing his deformed hand, he